

Notice of Allowability

Application No.

10/036,841

Examiner

Nathan M. Nutter

Applicant(s)

WANG ET AL.

Art Unit

1711

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☐ This communication is responsive to ____.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 37-67.
3. ☒ The drawings filed on 15 April 2002 are accepted by the Examiner.
4. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: ____.

5. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
(a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
6. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application. **THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.**

7. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
8. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS must be submitted.
(a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No. ____.
(b) ☐ including changes required by the proposed drawing correction filed ____, which has been approved by the Examiner.
(c) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No. ____.

Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet.

9. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

- 1 ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
3 ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
5 ☒ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449), Paper No. 1-3.
7 ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit of Biological Material
- 2 ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
4 ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413), Paper No. ____.
6 ☒ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8 ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9 ☐ Other

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. 121:

- I. Claims 1-36, drawn to a superabsorbent composition having a glass transition temperature higher than the temperature of use; and an elastomer having a glass transition temperature lower than the temperature of use in a two-phase composition, classified in class 525, subclasses 191, 221, 222, 232 and 241.
- II. Claims 37-67, drawn to a macroporous superabsorbent film, comprising: 65%-92% by weight of a superabsorbent material; and 8%-35% by weight of an elastomer derived from latex emulsion; wherein the macroporous superabsorbent film having a two-phase morphology wherein the superabsorbent material is in a first phase and the elastomer derived from latex is in a second phase, classified in class 525, subclasses 221, 222, 232, 238 and 241, and class 264, subclasses 171.1 and 172.13.
- III. Claims 68-100, drawn to a method for producing a superabsorbent composition, classified in class 525, subclasses 50+.

The inventions are distinct, each from the other because:

Inventions of Group I and of Group II are related as mutually exclusive species in an intermediate-final product relationship. Distinctness is proven for claims in this relationship if the intermediate product is useful to make other than the final product (MPEP § 806.04(b), 3rd paragraph), and the species are patentably distinct (MPEP §

Art Unit: 1711

806.04(h)). In the instant case, the intermediate product is deemed to be useful as a molding composition suitable to produce fibers, pellets or particles, and the inventions are deemed patentably distinct since there is nothing on this record to show them to be obvious variants. Should applicant traverse on the ground that the species are not patentably distinct, applicant should submit evidence or identify such evidence now of record showing the species to be obvious variants or clearly admit on the record that this is the case. In either instance, if the examiner finds one of the inventions anticipated by the prior art, the evidence or admission may be used in a rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) of the other invention.

Inventions of Group I and of Group III are related as process of making and product made. The inventions are distinct if either or both of the following can be shown: (1) that the process as claimed can be used to make other and materially different product or (2) that the product as claimed can be made by another and materially different process (MPEP § 806.05(f)). In the instant case the process can be used to make other and materially different products, such as crosslinked latex films of styrene and butadiene.

Because these inventions are distinct for the reasons given above and have acquired a separate status in the art as shown by their different classification, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.

Because these inventions are distinct for the reasons given above and have acquired a separate status in the art because of their recognized divergent subject matter, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.

Art Unit: 1711

During a telephone conversation with Mark Swanson by Examiner Chang on 16 September 2003 a provisional election was made with traverse to prosecute the invention of Group II, claims 37-67. Affirmation of this election must be made by applicant in replying to this Office action. Claims 1-36 and 68-100 are withdrawn from further consideration by the examiner, 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a non-elected invention.

Applicant is reminded that upon the cancellation of claims to a non-elected invention, the inventorship must be amended in compliance with 37 CFR 1.48(b) if one or more of the currently named inventors is no longer an inventor of at least one claim remaining in the application. Any amendment of inventorship must be accompanied by a request under 37 CFR 1.48(b) and by the fee required under 37 CFR 1.17(i).

REASONS FOR ALLOWANCE

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: No prior art has been found nor presented that either teaches or fairly suggests the manufacture of a macroporous superabsorbent film, comprising: 65%-92% by weight of a superabsorbent material; and 8%-35% by weight of an elastomer derived from latex emulsion; wherein the macroporous superabsorbent film having a two-phase morphology wherein the superabsorbent material is in a first phase and the elastomer derived from latex is in a second phase, as herein recited and claimed. The references to Rezai et al ('074), cited by applicants, and Korpman, newly cited, are retained of interest. Neither reference is deemed to negate the patentability of the instant claims. both patents teach the production of superabsorbents that may contain elastomer

Art Unit: 1711

phases. However, neither teaches the compositional limitations recited and claimed herein. Note the Abstracts of each patent. Since there are no other outstanding issues with regard to the clarity or enablement of the claims, these claims are deemed to contain allowable subject matter.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it **MUST** be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Maxwell J. Peterson on 26 September 2003.

The application has been amended as follows:

In the claims:

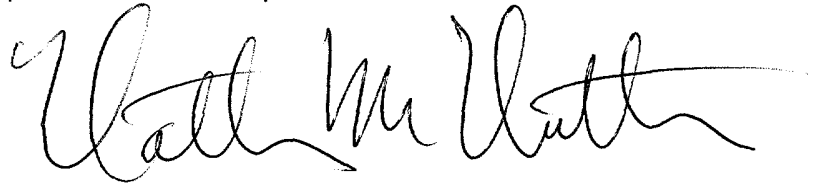
Cancel claims 1-36 and 68-100.

Art Unit: 1711

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Nathan M. Nutter whose telephone number is 703-308-2443. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 9:30 am to 6:00 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, James J. Seidleck can be reached on 703-308-2462. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 872-9306.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-0661.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nathan M. Nutter', with a stylized, cursive script.

Nathan M. Nutter
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1711

nmn
26 September 2003